

The 16th Annual

Yesterday & Today

Brought to you by
The Vermont Journal & The Message

2026



ROCKINGHAM TOWN HALL CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

The original Rockingham Town Hall, built in 1887, consisted of town offices, businesses, the opera house, and a banquet hall. The building burned on May 10, 1925; the town records were saved, but at 5 p.m., the bell fell from the clock tower.

The current Rockingham Town Hall building was built in 1926, with a newly refurbished opera house. The Bellows Falls Women's Club had its

own rooms in the basement, now referred to as the lower theater, where municipal governments hold their meetings. The businesses were at street level, and a grand clock tower was installed where the bell once hung. The building's reopening was celebrated with a movie and a fancy new marquee.

In the 1960s, the clock stopped working, and for three decades it sat silent, as the downtown busi-

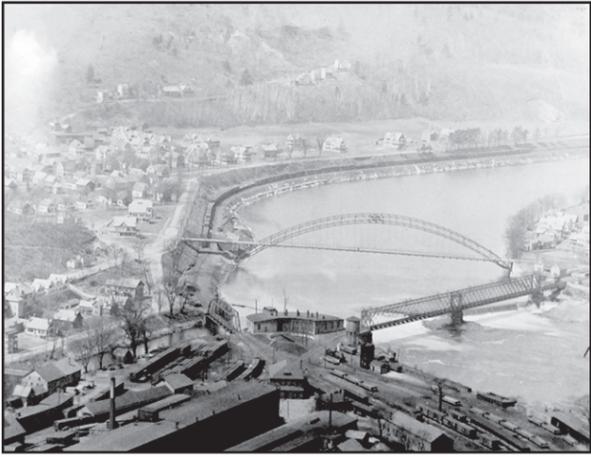
nesses left or closed doors. In the late 1980s, a citizen group called Ourtown was formed to encourage participation in neighborhood improvements, raising funds to repair the clock tower, and, in the early 2000s, the lower theater. On New Year's Eve 1991, the clock rang grandly once more.

Below is an excerpt from the poem written for the newly repaired clock. "When a good seed is planted and

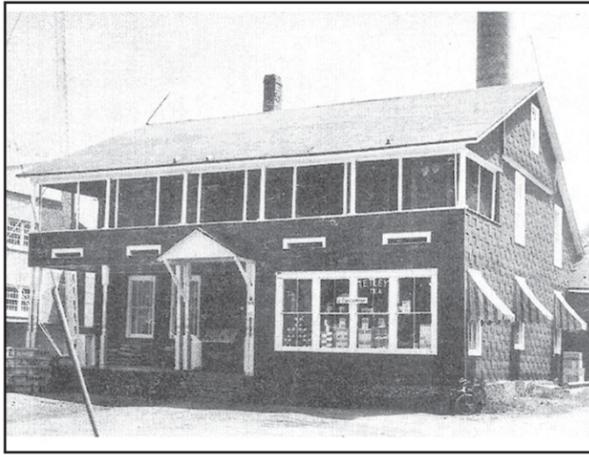
cared for it grows...in the Village of Old Bellows Falls, in the Town of Rockingham, then strong people stood proud and said, 'What we'll do...will heal the clock and Village too!' From the Tower – the center – the Heart, I declare now it rings out with honor to the passersby there in the Village of Old Bellows Falls, in the Town of Rockingham."

The Town Hall and Opera House will be 100 years old this year.

Remembering and Honoring Our Friend



Aerial view of the Arch Bridge in Bellows Falls.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Tony's Store in Cavendish, circa 1906.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Looking North up Depot Street, towards Main Street, in Proctorsville.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Coolidge Drugstore on Main Street in Ludlow, circa 1800s. Mrs. Coolidge became the first woman druggist.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Echo Lake Inn in Ludlow, circa late 1800s.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Ludlow Green with fence surround, late 1800s. First Baptist Church built in 1840, replaced with present in 1892. Horse sheds shown behind church.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Crowley Cheese Factory in Healdville.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Lower Perkinsville Village.
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Headquarters and Whitcomb Lodge, Camp Plymouth, B.S.A., in Tyson, circa 1938.
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Ron Patch, Dec. 15, 1951 - July 5, 2025



Looking up the river from the bridge in Charlestown, Route 5 on the left.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Upper Main Street in Chester, circa 1909.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



The Frank Harris home on Main Street in Chester.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



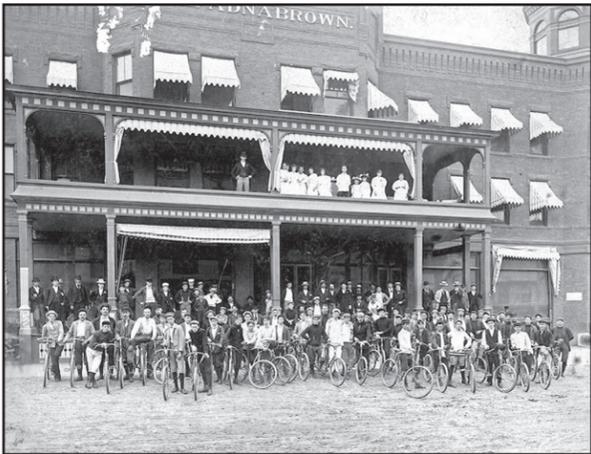
Fullam's Chair Factory on Bridge Street in Ludlow with the Andover Street train trestle, circa early 1900s.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Main Street in Ludlow, early 1900s. Goddard Hotel, now site of Mobil station. Warner's Garage, now Ellison apartment building.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Parade on Main Street in Ludlow, Nov. 11, 1918, celebrating end of WWI.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Cyclists in front of the Adnabrown Hotel in Springfield.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



1913 log jam at the Cheshire Bridge in Springfield.
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Farrar Mansur Museum in Weston.
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Dedicated to the memory of Ron Patch

Ron patch authored his local history column for our newspaper every week, and heavily contributed to this annual photo section. In honor of his memory, we dedicate this year's Yesterday & Today booklet to Ron. He is dearly missed.

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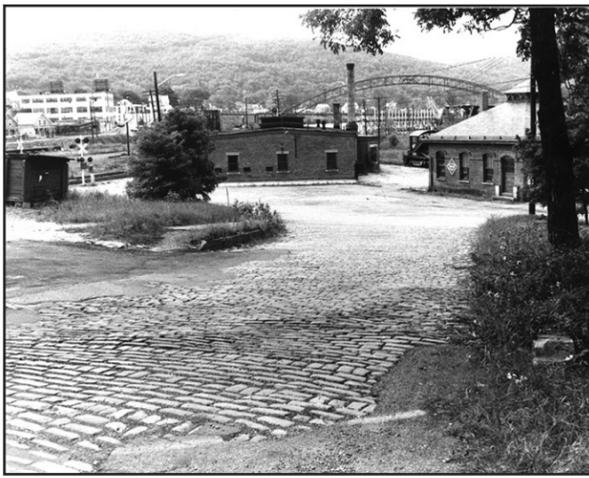
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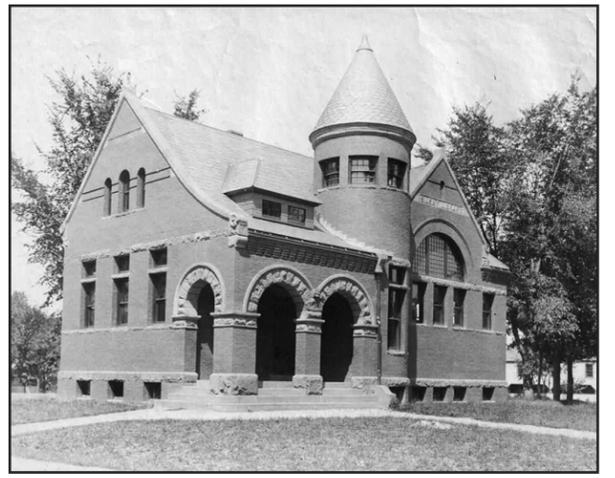
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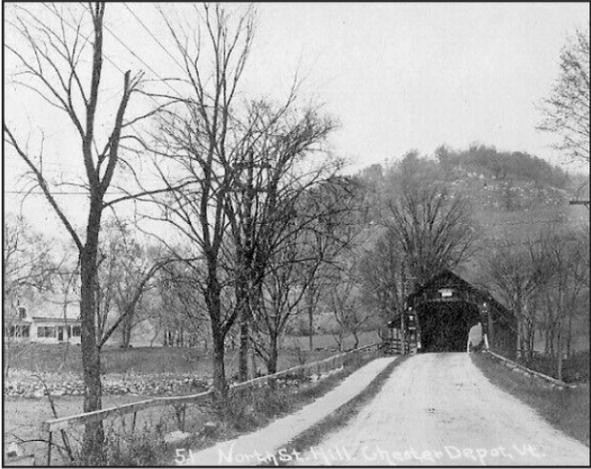
Horse-drawn logging in Weston.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Depot area in Bellows Falls, showing the Arch Bridge and cobblestone streets. The edge of Robertson Paper Company is on the right.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BELLOWS FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Silsby Free Public Library in Charlestown, built in 1893. Property of Charlestown Historical Society, D. Conant.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY SILSBY FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



The approach to the North Street Bridge in the Chester Depot, looking towards the Stone Village.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



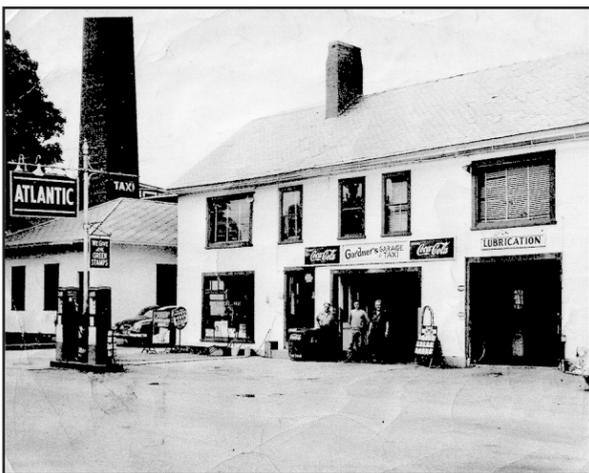
Tremont Square in the mid-1950s, in Claremont.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY FORGOTTEN NEW HAMPSHIRE PAGE



In 1890, five farming families from Sweden came to Landgrove to take over farms that had been abandoned. These are members of three of the families - Nyrene, Westine, and Neilson.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROBERT BADGER



A postcard photo, dated 1921, of the Hotel Wantastiquet in Londonderry. The hotel was previously on the site of the West River Coffee Barn.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WEST RIVER COFFEE BARN



Gardner's Garage and Taxi service on Main Street in Ludlow. Became Cumberland Farms in the 1980s.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BLACK RIVER ACADEMY MUSEUM



Fleet of trucks at Cota & Cota on Green Street in Bellows Falls, 1961.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY COTA & COTA

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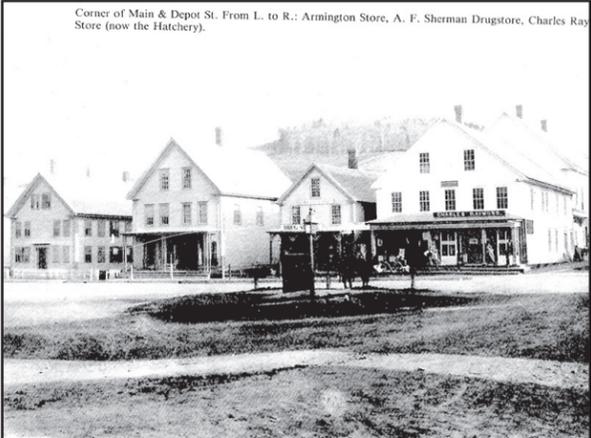
Socony Gasoline station and garage, located on Main Street in Chester near the intersection of Grafton Street. This building was lost in an explosion and fire in 1971.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Winter in rural Grafton.
PHOTO FROM THE DANNY CLEMONS COLLECTION



Centennial and old Bellows Falls Town Hall.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



The corner of Main and Depot streets in Ludlow. Left to right, at this time, was Armington Store, A. F. Sherman Drugstore, and Charles Raymon's Store.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BLACK RIVER ACADEMY MUSEUM



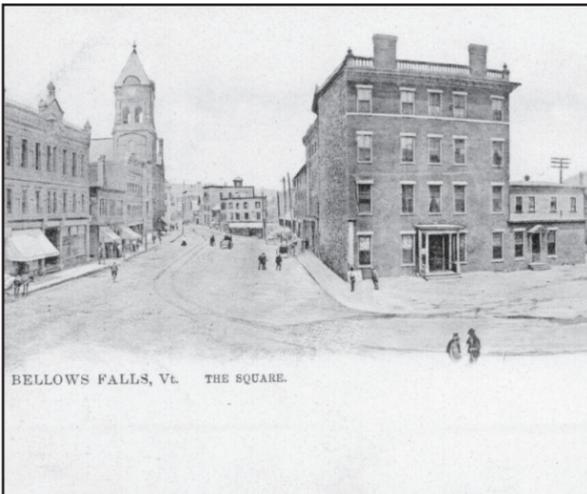
The Adnabrown Hotel in Springfield.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Pleasant Street in Claremont, July 31, 1905.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY STEVE SLOCUM, N.H. VINTAGE POSTCARDS PAGE



Chester Diner, October 1985.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY COUNTRY GIRL DINER



The Bellows Falls Square on a winter day.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Abenague Machine Shops at high water on March 28, 1913, in Westminster.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Parks & Woolson complex on Park Street in Springfield around 1920. Originally constructed in 1829, founded by John Davidson and Frederick Parks. In 1846, they took in another partner, Amasa Woolson. After Davidson died in 1850, the firm became Parks & Woolson.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



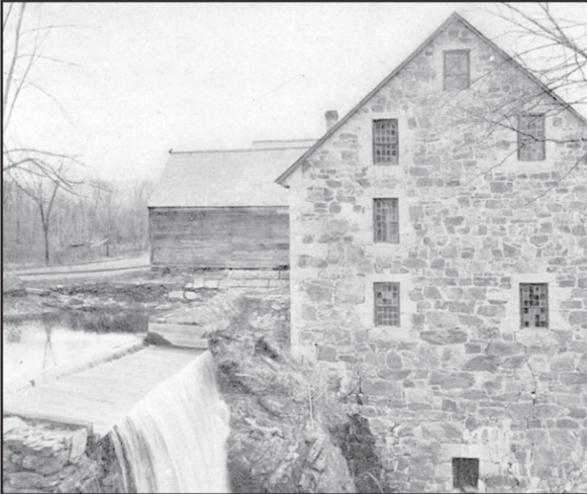
Chester Depot showing the park, town hall, and Frederick Marsh's house.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



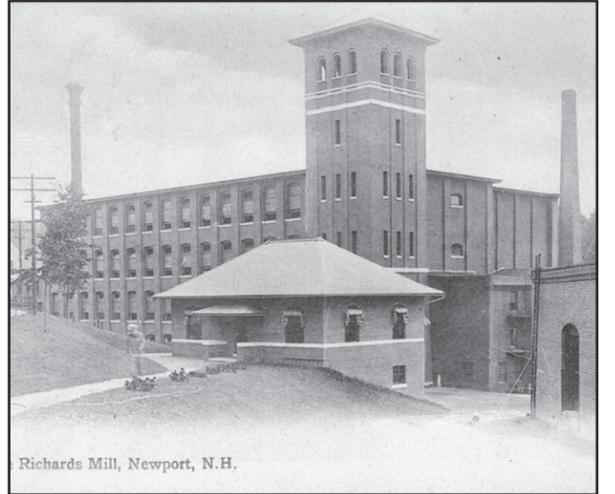
1855 aerial of bridges and train station in Bellows Falls.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Lyman Bailey house on Nichols Road in Landgrove. Bailey was the town blacksmith during the mid-19th century.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROBERT BADGER



The Old Stone Mill in Charlestown.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WALTER JUNG, N.H. VINTAGE POSTCARDS PAGE



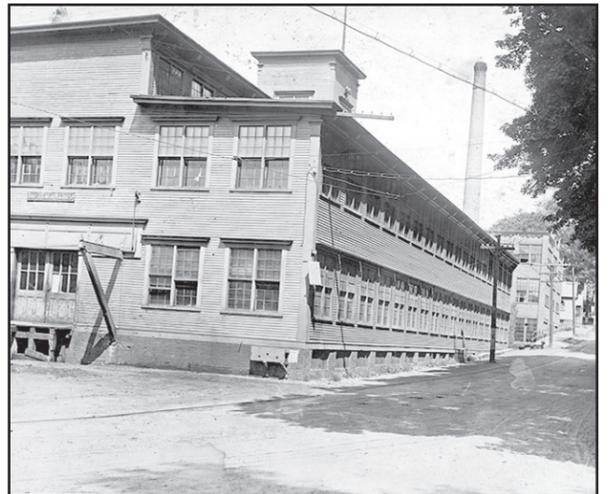
The Richards Mill in Newport, postmarked 1909.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WALTER JUNG, N.H. VINTAGE POSTCARDS PAGE



Pleasant Street Extension in Ludlow, early 1900s, after the village installed electricity in 1903.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



Lawrence Mills, now Brockway Mills, in Bellows Falls.
PHOTO FROM THE DANNY CLEMONS COLLECTION



Jones & Lamson Machine Tool Company in Springfield.
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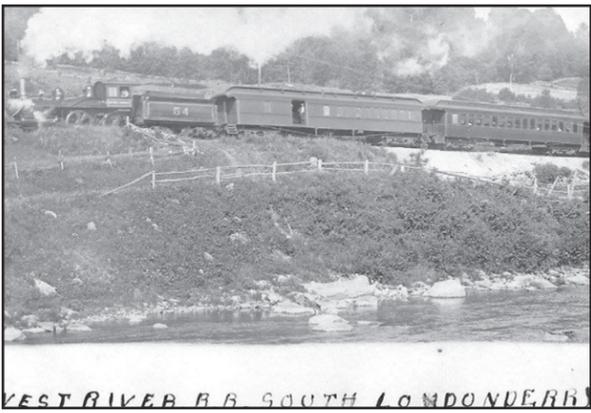
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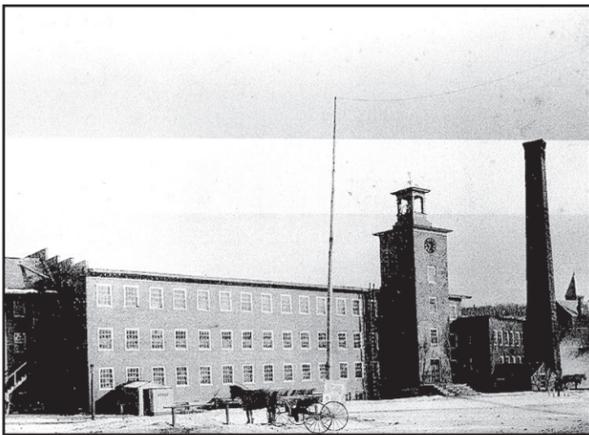
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The West River Railroad ran between Brattleboro and South Londonderry along the West River. Towns along the line bonded to build stations, such as one in South Londonderry, which was completed in 1879, and the first trains ran in 1880.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The original Ludlow Wollen Mill, built in 1834 and burned in 1865. The second tower, known as the clock tower, you notice today was added when the building was rebuilt later in 1865.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY BLACK RIVER ACADEMY MUSEUM



Springfield Plaza signs from the 1970s.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SHEILA SIMONDS



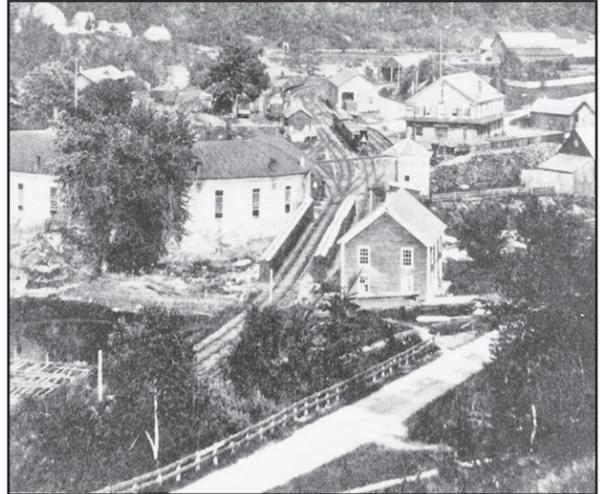
Arthur Fuller bought out his former employer and took over the Chester Drug Store in 1904.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Birsky house in Springfield where the plaza is today, before the flood control dam was opened in 1960.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY SPRINGFIELD ART & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Canal and Depot area in Bellows Falls, P. W. Taft, 1870.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY ROCKINGHAM FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY



Island gas stations in Bellows Falls.

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Looking north up the West River in Weston.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Goddard House in Ludlow, built in 1891, serving as a hotel. The building was purchased and destroyed in 1920.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY BLACK RIVER ACADEMY MUSEUM

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Gates Garage on Westminister Street in Bellows Falls, pre-1970s fires.
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A truck heads toward the Chester Depot. Behind the truck we see the covered bridge that spanned the Williams River. Grist Mill to the right.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Alexander Mill, between South Londonderry and Londonderry.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY LONDONDERRY ARTS AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



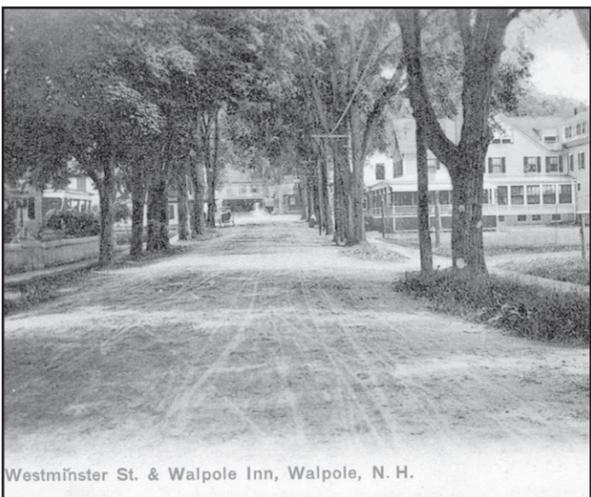
The Pot Belly Pub in Ludlow, known as the Moore Block. Housed a jewelry store from 1938-1942, and was demolished in 2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY BLACK RIVER ACADEMY MUSEUM



Mr. Bailey in South Charlestown.
PHOTO FROM THE RON PATCH COLLECTION



W. H. Wheeler Drug Store in Springfield on the corner of Main and Park streets. It was home to a store in 1795. The Wheelers took over in 1852, and celebrated 50 years of business in 1902.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY CHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Westminister Street and the Walpole Inn, in Walpole, circa 1904-1907.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY WALTER JUNG, N.H. VINTAGE POSTCARDS PAGE



Green Mountain Sugar House in Ludlow has been a staple since 1955.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY GREEN MOUNTAIN SUGAR HOUSE



Stevens High School, Claremont, circa 1915-1930.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVID GRAY, N.H. VINTAGE POSTCARDS PAGE

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